

“Crime Scene Investigation” Teaches Loss Prevention and Safety

Children’s Place Retail Stores, Inc., a retailer known for its fashion-forward styles for children from newborn to 10 years old, had increased its number of associates more than 30% since 2004, to 14,000 at over 800 stores. With 21,000 employees and additional stores in development, The Children’s Place knew that several of its training sessions would need to change to accommodate its growth.

THE CHILDREN’S
PLACE

The business need

The traditional training method involved removing managers and associates from the sales floor and conducting sessions in a classroom. This was both time-consuming and costly – and also not particularly compelling for the company’s associates, many of whom were under 25 and had different learning styles. The company began studying the way it trained associates in safety and loss prevention. They needed a way to engage associates so that they would easily learn these policies and procedures.

“Because our average associate is young and grew up with computers, we wanted something that would engage them so that they would learn these policies and procedures but in a fun way,” said Leslie McCleary, Director of Training and Development. The Children’s Place wanted to implement an e-learning solution because that approach was flexible and enabled associates to stop and start as needed, maximizing their time on the sales floor. E-learning was also a better fit for their type of associate.

The solution

The Children’s Place teamed with Root to create an interactive game-type training. Based on the popular *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* television shows, the session was composed of 11 “cases” for associates to solve. In these modules, learners take notes and collect clues to identify the cause of an accident or identify distractions used by shoplifters. They also “interview” witnesses and use tools from an online toolbox.

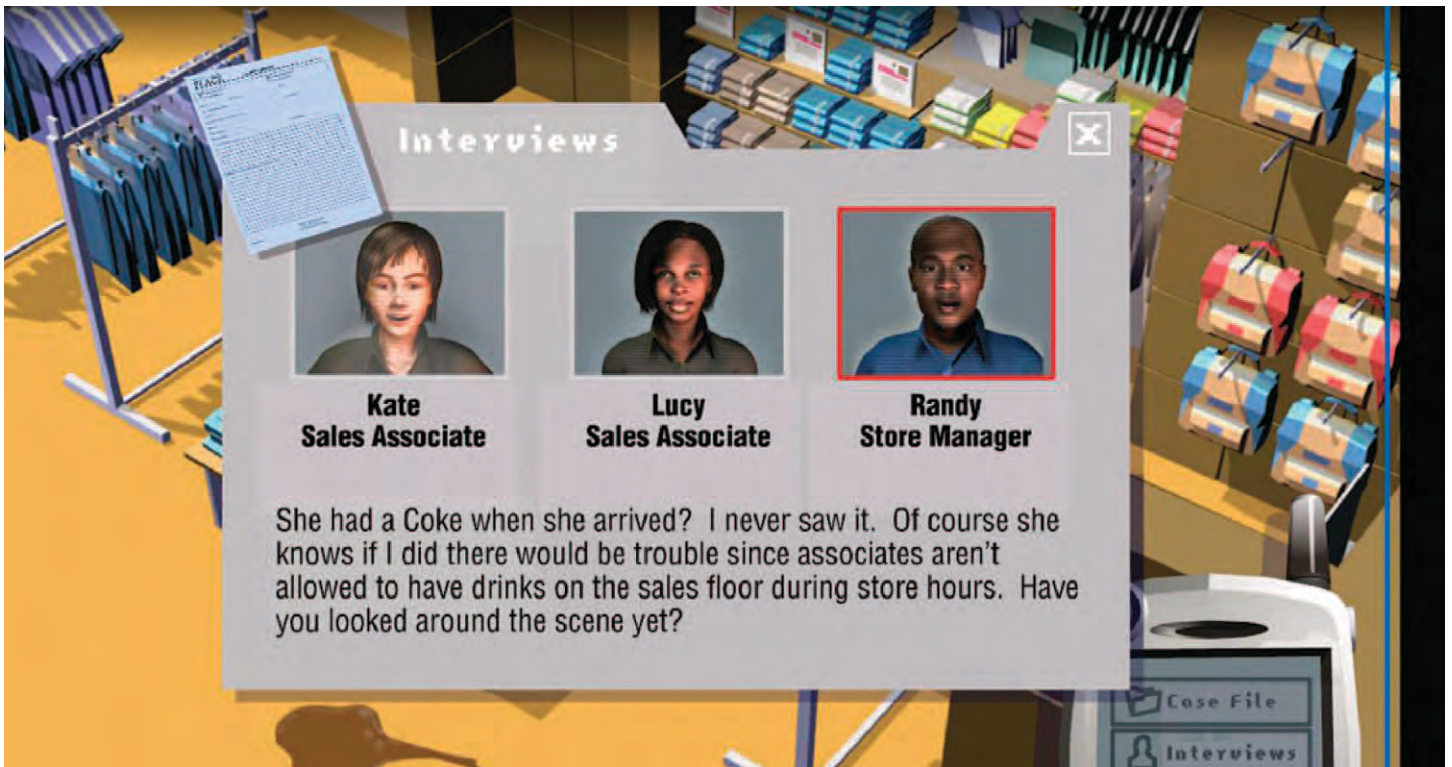
The elearning simulation is teamed with hands-on practice, also appealing to technology-shy veteran associates. After each practice exercise, an associate prints the exercise and reviews it with a learning partner – a manager or peer. The learner then demonstrates the concepts presented in the simulation.

Implementation

The design of The Children’s Place’s PSI: Place Scene Investigation program began in late 2005. The Children’s Place asked associates familiar with computer games about their likes and dislikes. Root used this feedback to mock up and test several renderings. Leadership wanted to give associates an opportunity to be part of the solution – not just feed them what they needed to know.

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Results

The Children's Place has run cost-benefit analyses on several of its e-learning projects and discovered that e-learning costs less than traditional training methods. In addition, an e-learning program like this one is easily modified and updated as company policies and needs change.

There is also a special benefit for managers. Inherent in the program is a reporting system, so managers have a thorough understanding of skills that have been reviewed and mastered. The program also reports how long learners spend on individual cases, so skills that may not be as well developed can be reviewed later. The Children's Place leaders agree that, for their associates, it was much more effective to impart the information in this way.

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About Root

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